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Volume 2, Issue 1

NEWS FROM THE 42ND DISTRICT

Assemblyman's Message

Welcome to the 2nd edition of "News From The 42nd District", my eNewsletter designed as a resource to help you keep informed of happenings in the State Capitol and the 42nd District. I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter. Your comments and suggestions are always appreciated!

Community Calendar

[January, 2004](#)
[February, 2004](#)
[March, 2004](#)

UP TO THE MINUTE UPDATE ON THE NEW SCHWARZENEGGER ADMINISTRATION

It is often said that the first 100 days of a new gubernatorial or presidential administration are the most critical – and the most revealing. Governor Schwarzenegger has now been in office for less than 100 days and certainly has made an impact.

On his first day in office, the new Governor called for three special sessions of the Legislature. The first special session was to repeal SB 60, the law allowing immigrants to get driver's licenses, the second was to enact further reforms to the workers' compensation system, and the third was to place before voters on the March ballot a general obligation bond for the state's deficit recovery and a Constitutional amendment to enact a spending cap. Since then, the Legislature has passed a bipartisan repeal of SB 60. In addition, in December, after weeks of intense negotiations, the Governor and the Legislature agreed to a \$15 billion "recovery bond" measure to appear on the March ballot to help retire the

state's burgeoning debt.

Governor Schwarzenegger also acted to restore the lower rate of the Vehicle License Fee, providing financial relief to millions of California motorists, but putting the state \$4 billion deeper into the red. Schwarzenegger also instituted a state hiring freeze and issued an executive order suspending all proposed state regulations and calling for the review of all regulations adopted, amended or repealed in the last five years.

On January 6th, the Governor delivered his first State of the State address to a joint session of the California Legislature. In his comments, the Governor said "the state of our state will soon be strong, because our people and our purpose are strong." He insisted he would work toward getting more money into our schools, and committed that he will not support any more than a ten percent increase in higher education tuition. Governor Schwarzenegger also said he will conduct a "total review of government -- its performance, its practices, its cost" in order to

address waste and duplication in state government. He also reiterated his commitment to improve the state's business climate, to create more jobs and to push for further worker's compensation reform. The Governor made clear that the only way he intends to address the \$15 billion deficit we are facing this year is by spending cuts, but did not detail any of the cuts he would propose – instead waiting to reveal his strategy in his first State Budget proposal. The Governor's speech was very hopeful and concluded with his

calling California an "empire of hope and aspirations."

On January 9th, Governor Schwarzenegger released his 2004-2005 Budget Plan, his spending blueprint that the State Legislature will consider. Traditionally, the January release of the Governor's Budget is merely a starting point -- the first step in the months-long budget process. But his \$99 billion budget proposal has already caused a lot of concern around the state.

Cont'd P.5

Individual Highlights

➤ Assemblyman's Message	1
➤ Update on New Administration	1
➤ Koretz on Workers Comp	2
➤ L.A. Veterans Administration Land	2
➤ Staff Profile – Jay Greenstein	2
➤ Community Agency Profile	3
➤ Issues of Concern to You	3
➤ Department of Real Estate...	3
➤ Assembly Labor Cmte Update	4
➤ 2004 California Laws	4
➤ Natural Community Conservation Planning: an Update	5

KORETZ ADVOCATES STRONGLY FOR LOWER WORKERS COMP RATES

On October 1, 2003, the Governor signed AB 227 and SB 228, two bills that contained significant reforms of California's Workers Compensation system. Insurance Commissioner John Garamendi believes that the costs of the system were reduced 30% by these actions. According to Commissioner Garamendi, a small group of legislators, including Assemblyman Koretz, demanded larger cuts than anyone else was pushing for, which is why the reductions were so dramatic.

Commissioner Garamendi recommended a premium reduction for employers who purchase workers comp policies, but many insurers refused. The State Compensation Insurance Fund, a state agency which has over 50% of the market and is viewed by some as a renegade agency, passed on only a 2.9% premium decrease, even though they are currently so profitable that they expend only 68 cents for every dollar of insurance premium they take in!

According to Insurance Commissioner Garamendi, the Legislature must enact additional reforms on an urgency basis (requiring a 2/3 vote of approval) before March 31st in order to impact rate changes effective July 1, 2004. However, Assemblyman Koretz believes that before we cut further and harm injured workers, we must find a way to guarantee those savings don't just become more profit for insurers. Koretz is considering legislation to require the insurance companies to pass on most of these savings to employers.

Staff Profile -- Jay Greenstein

Jay joined the district office staff of Assemblyman Paul Koretz as a Field Representative on January 8th, 2001; one month after the Assemblyman took office. He first met Assemblyman Koretz in 1986, after completing his first year as a Masters degree student at the USC School of Public Administration. While completing his M.A., Jay spent more than a year working with then-Council Member Koretz on various City projects.

Early on in his career, Jay worked as an Assistant Area Director in the Los Angeles office for the American Jewish Committee. He also was fortunate to have the opportunity to later work as the Councilman's Deputy after Koretz was first elected to office in West Hollywood. Jay has also worked on several professional candidate and initiative campaign management teams. Before coming to work for the Assemblyman, Jay was a field representative for Los Angeles School Board Member David Tokofsky.

As the Assemblyman's Field Rep for the Westside of the District, a majority of Jay's time is spent assisting constituents with any state-related matters they may have. His other responsibilities in the District Office include working on health care, public education and transportation issues, and staffing the Assemblyman's Health Care Advisory Committee.

Jay confesses that he now spends most of his free time outside of work with his wife Pamela, and their 3-year old son Jeremy and 8 month old daughter Emily. Pamela is a second grade teacher for Culver City Unified School District.

Koretz Joins Debate Over Future of West L.A. Veterans Administration Land

Assemblyman Koretz has raised concerns over the process to decide the future of the West Los Angeles Veterans Administration land. Community leaders in Brentwood and surrounding communities, along with elected officials have raised concerns about the Federal government exploring the possibility of leasing or selling for development what they would consider "excess" Veterans Administration land. This land use planning is part of a 20-year plan conducted for assets held by the Department for the entire country. In West Los Angeles, this land could then be developed without the input of local government entities and without true community outreach. Assemblyman Koretz has joined with Congressman Waxman, County Supervisor Yaroslavsky, L.A. City Councilmembers Miscikowski and Weiss, and others in raising concerns.

Assemblyman Koretz in a letter dated September 17, 2003 wrote to Federal Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony Principi: "I am confident that residents and businesses I represent would support new and improved facilities that provide services for our veterans. At the same time, they would question the lease or sale of veteran's administration land for other unrelated commercial or housing development. It has been my understanding that this land was originally donated to the Federal government for the purpose of serving our veterans. If the Veterans Administration is considering other options for development, the community and their elected representatives

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Community Agency Profile: Alternative Living for the Aging

Living in the 42nd Assembly District, is a very large population of seniors. Most of these seniors are trying to survive on a very low fixed income, while housing and healthcare costs are rising at an alarming rate.

Alternative Living for the Aging, ALA, is a non-profit, non-sectarian organization that works to provide affordable housing solutions for seniors while also addressing some of the psycho-social issues that accompany growing older.

Currently ALA operates 5 cooperative apartment communities as well as a roommate matching service for seniors. According to ALA, seniors can maintain "independence through interdependence." They have a private room or apartment but are part of a supportive and nurturing environment. The residents of each community help each other with daily living and have fun together as the cooperative living model provides residents with many social opportunities.

In order to qualify to live in one of ALA's cooperative housing units, one must be over 62, with a low/moderate income, flexible and able to share with others. Also, residents must be clear thinking and without debilitating health problems. They need to have their own doctors and be able to manage their own medications.

Alternative Living for the Aging **Contact Information**

937 N. Fairfax Ave.
West Hollywood, CA 90046
(323) 650-7988
Ms. Janet Witkin, Executive Director

Beyond the issue of affordable housing, ALA provides an alternative to living alone in isolation and or being institutionalized. ALA helps seniors to grow older with pride, independence and dignity. Since 1978, ALA has counseled over 21,000 people and has facilitated bringing together thousands of older people to share housing.

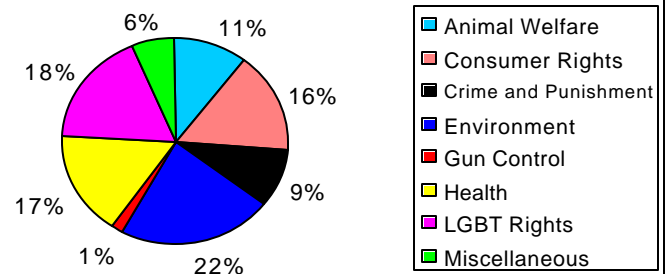
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Issues of Concern To You...

Our office received a total of 2,860 letters, faxes, and emails concerning specific issues or bills that our constituents were concerned about during the 2003 Legislative Session. This graph depicts what issues are most important to 42nd District residents. After tallying all the different issues, the environment was determined to be the most important issue to our constituents making up 22% of the letters we received regarding specific legislation. LGBT rights was the second biggest issue with 18%. Most of these letters were from constituents expressing their support for AB 205—the landmark Domestic Partner bill.

42nd District Issues

Based on 2,860 letters, faxes or emails



CA Dept. of Real Estate – What You Need to Know!

Are you considering changing careers and becoming a real estate agent? Well, if the answer is yes—you are not alone. Currently, the Department of Real Estate receives 15,000 pieces of mail every month and on average each month 7,650 people take the examination to become a broker or a salesperson in real estate. The number of individuals entering the field of real estate has doubled in the last 3 years, while the Department of Real Estate has lost a fourth of their staff due to California's severe budget deficit. This disparity between supply and demand has caused wait times to double and triple as the Department of Real Estate wades through thousands of applications and answers 7,255 phone calls per day. Soon there will be 1 Real Estate Agent for every 90 Californians!

In an effort to accommodate this unprecedented demand for real estate licenses, the Department of Real Estate has made as many services as possible available [online](http://www.dre.ca.gov). Please abide by the following guidelines when applying for your real estate license:

1. Submit your application and fee for an exam date ONLY ONCE via mail or fax, but not both. Submitting multiple applications will delay processing of your application and exam scheduling.
2. To find out if your application is being processed, check your bank statement or credit card statement to see if the fee has been cashed/charged. Do not call the DRE unless absolutely necessary—the same staff who processes applications also answers the phones! Please check the status of your application by going to www.dre.ca.gov, almost all of your

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Assembly Labor Committee: A Look Back at 2003 Successes

The Assembly Committee on Labor and Employment and Chairman Paul Koretz had a busy year fighting to better the lives and strengthen the voice of working people in California. The Committee heard many significant labor and employment measures this year including the following bills, which were signed into law this fall;

AB 276 (Koretz): Increases the fines and civil penalties for certain violations of the Labor Code. Many of these penalties have not been increased in decades.

AB 196 (Leno): Expands the definition of sex to include gender, actual or perceived, for purposes of defining unlawful employment discrimination. This bill is intended to offer protection to the transgender population.

AB 1688 (Goldberg): Regulates the industry of car washing and polishing by providing specific requirements that employers of car washers must implement with regard to wages, hours, and working conditions. This bill is intended to prevent the proliferation of sweatshop-like conditions in the car wash industry by ensuring that car wash employers pay their workers the legally required wage.

SB 796 (Dunn): Enacts the "Labor Code Private Attorneys General Act of 2004", by authorizing aggrieved employees to file civil actions to recover civil penalties under the Labor Code.

In 2003, great legislative strides were made in the enactment of bills protecting the rights and safety of all sectors of workers in California and improving the enforceability of existing laws. For 2004, the Committee expects many challenges and will strive to defend this progress while exploring new opportunities to strengthen our economy and preserve jobs.

Cont'd from p.2 – Veterans Administration Land

demand that we are given the appropriate opportunity to review, comment and amend the proposals for development."

Meanwhile, Assemblyman Koretz has taken an active role in supporting the new State Veterans Home planned for the West Los Angeles site. The Assemblyman has expressed optimism that the California Department of Veterans Affairs will conduct a thorough community outreach process and has pledged the assistance of his office in support of this effort. The Department has already hired a consultant, Consensus Planning of Los Angeles, a planning firm that has extensive experience in conducting community outreach for numerous public and private sector projects in our region.

Assemblyman Koretz has expressed the hope that the Federal Veterans Administration will take

WHAT 'S NEW IN CALIFORNIA LAWS FOR 2004

Amid the many challenges California faced in 2003, the Legislature was successful in enacting new laws, which will protect our privacy, expand civil rights, improve the environment and increase public safety. Below is a list of some of the new laws, which could have a direct impact on you:

AB 28 will increase the refund value consumers pay on recyclable containers such as water, soft drinks and beer to four cents for beverage containers under 24 ounces and eight cents on larger one. This measure is intended to improve California's rate of recycling, which has slipped from 80% to 75 %.

AB 205 enacts the California Domestic Partner Rights and Responsibilities Act of 2003, which extends to registered domestic partners substantially all rights, benefits, and obligations of married persons under state law, unless accorded to married persons by federal law, the California Constitution, or initiative statutes. This law will take effect on January 1, 2005. [Please click here for more information.](#)

AB 879 will expand California's HIV prevention options by developing physician guidelines for post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) for accidental sexual exposures to HIV infection. PEP is a method of preventing HIV transmission following sexual assault or in occupational settings associated with needle stick exposures to health care workers. Treatment usually involves a 2-4 week regimen of antiretroviral medications beginning within hours of a likely HIV exposure.

AB 1131 states that any caretaker of an elder or dependent adult who commits theft, embezzlement, forgery, fraud or identity theft, with respect to the property or personal identifying information of their charge, is punishable by imprisonment when the value of that taken exceeds \$400. Where the property taken is worth under \$400, the caretaker may face a fine not exceeding \$1,000, imprisonment in county jail not to exceed one year, or both.

SB 1 creates the California Financial Privacy Information Act, making it the toughest privacy law in the nation. This landmark measure gives consumers greater control over their private financial information, such as bank account balances, spending habits and payment history. The bill would also make it easy for consumers to inform their financial institution of their privacy choices through a simple form. Bill takes effect July 1, 2004.

SB 20 creates the Electronic Waste Recycling Act of 2003, which establishes the nation's first comprehensive electronics recycling law to safely manage cathode ray tubes (CRTs) used in computer monitors and TVs, flat panel screens and other video displays that contain hazardous components. Starting July 1, 2004, California retailers will begin collecting an electronic waste recycling fee, ranging from \$6 to \$10 dollars (depending on the size of the electronic device). Mail order and Internet purchases also will be subject to the fee.

this opportunity to allow the State Veterans Home to be built in a desirable location that takes full advantage of the opportunity to incorporate some of the most beautiful undeveloped land that remains on the Westside. If this is done appropriately, Assemblyman Koretz believes that the community will fully support a Veterans Home project that allows this marvelous land to be fully enjoyed by the veterans who are residents of this facility. He believes that the caretakers of this invaluable land have the responsibility of carrying out the wishes of the Los Angeles pioneer landowner families that donated this land, with the intention of serving our nation's veterans for years to come.

Assemblyman Paul Koretz 42nd District

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We're on the Web at

<http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a42/>

Natural Community Conservation Planning: An Update

by Dan Silver

In 1991, the State of California launched the Natural Community Conservation Planning, or NCCP, program. The goal was to plan proactively, on an ecosystem basis, for rare and endangered species while providing up-front permits for compatible development. Recently, the Legislature updated the statute, strengthening scientific standards and providing for public input.

Typically through partnerships between state, federal, and local governments, NCCP plans have been adopted covering coastal San Diego County, central Orange County, and western Riverside County. Plans are under development in southern Orange County and the Palos Verdes Peninsula. New financing tools have also resulted, such as a development mitigation fee to match state and federal funds.

While not perfect, NCCPs have succeeded in protecting large and impressive blocks of interconnected habitat, while directing development to less sensitive locations. Endangered species that have benefited from NCCPs include the California gnatcatcher, the Quino checkerspot butterfly and the arroyo toad. An NCCP is not, however, a substitute for good overall land use planning.

The [Endangered Habitats League](#) has worked to maximize the benefits of the NCCP program, and continues to closely monitor its progress.

Dan Silver is the Executive Director of the Endangered Habitats League in Los Angeles & serves as a Member of Assemblyman Koretz's Environmental Advisory Committee

Cont'd from P.3 – ALA Profile

At the helm of ALA is Janet Witkin, the Executive Director and founder of the organization. ALA's services include:

- Roommate Matching
- Co-op Houses—The Lee and Ruth Rothman House (In 42nd AD)
- The El Greco Apt Community—The David and Sylvia Weisz Family Courtyard Apartments (In 42nd AD)
- The Santa Monica Cooperative Apartment Community—The Liffman House
- The West Hollywood Senior Apartment community—The Schutrum -Piteo Foundation Senior Courtyard Apartments (In 42nd AD)

For more information about Alternative Living for the Aging, please contact Janet Witkin at Alternative Living for the Aging, Inc., 937 N. Fairfax Avenue, West Hollywood, CA 90046, (323) 650-7988.

Cont'd from P. 3 – Dept. of Real Estate

questions can be answered on the website.

3. The processing of all applications is based on the date the application is received. The Department of Real Estate cannot acknowledge receipt of a faxed application. If possible, adjust your fax machine to ensure complete delivery.
4. Provide complete, accurate and detailed information when answering questions regarding past and present disciplinary actions, criminal charges and convictions on you application. When in doubt — disclose. The failure to disclose charges/convictions will result in substantial delays in the processing of your application and may result in denial of the license application.

Cont'd from P. 1—Governor Update

Because the Governor did not incorporate any significant revenue increases as part of his proposal, in order to fill a \$14 billion gap the budget relies on a combination of more borrowing, fee increases at colleges and universities, shifting precious tax revenue away from cities and counties, limiting access to health care programs, transferring transportation project funding to other purposes, as well as a host of other accounting maneuvers that have been used and criticized in the past. The budget is based on voter approval of the \$15 billion deficit bond proposal on the March 2nd ballot. The budget proposes an additional ten percent cut in the Medi-Cal provider reimbursement rate, even though a previous five percent reduction is currently being held up by a state court. The budget also proposes

capping enrollment in critical public health programs such as Healthy Families and California Children's Services and the AIDS Drug Assistance Program, which would result in waiting lists for these critically important programs.

It is now up to the Legislature to scrutinize each and every line of the budget proposal and agree or disagree. Ultimately, agreement has to be reached on every dollar and a 2/3 vote must be obtained to pass the State Budget this summer. As in years past, it will be a significant challenge to obtain such consensus, as there are a number of proposals in this budget that concern some Democrats and Republicans alike. But both sides have committed to working together to reach an agreement. Stay tuned!

Also, please do not hesitate to call our District Office at 310-285-5490 if you have any questions or concerns. The Department of Real Estate is doing an excellent job with the resources available to them, but it is also our job to help you too if you are having any problems.

We wish everyone beginning a career in real estate lots of luck and success!